COST OF OPERATING AN AUTOMOBILE

The owner of a 1974 standard-sized automobile will spend $15,892 over 10 years to drive and maintain the automobile. The owner of a compact 1974 model will pay $12,880, and the owner of a subcompact $11,153. These costs, from an updated study by the Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, are for an automobile operated from a home in suburban Baltimore, Md. The study assumes that the automobile is driven 100,000 miles over a 10-year period: 14,500 miles the first year and successively fewer miles in each of the remaining 9 years.

Depreciation is the greatest single cost of owning and operating a standard and a compact model; while maintenance, accessories, parts, and tires are the greatest costs of a subcompact model (see table). The operating costs for the standard-sized, compact, and subcompact automobiles are not entirely comparable because the standard-sized car is assumed to have such optional features as air conditioning and a V-8 engine that are not assumed to be part of the smaller cars. These items of optional equipment will affect the costs for maintenance, gas, and insurance.

Cost per mile of operating an automobile, by size of automobile, 1974 model

Size of car	Total cost	Depreciation	Maintenance, accessories, parts, and tires	Gas and oil (excluding taxes)	Garage, parking and tolls	Insurance	State and Federal taxes
	Cents per mile						
Standard	15.9	4.2	3.4	3.2	2.0	1.6	1.5
Compact	12.9	2.9	2.7	2.6	2.0	1.5	1.2
Subcompact	11.2	2.3	2.5	2.0	2.0	1.5	.9
	Percentage distribution						
Standard	100	26.4	21.4	20.1	12.6	10.1	9.4
Compact	100	22.5	20.9	20.2	15.5	11.6	9.3
Subcompact	100	20.5	22.3	17.9	17.9	13.4	8.0

Note.—Assuming operation over 10 years and 100,000 miles from suburban Baltimore, Md.

Source: Liston, L.L., and Sherrer, R.W. *Cost of Operating an Automobile.* U.S. Dept. Transportation, Fed. Highway Admin., April 1974.

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